

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of March 24, 2015

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois, Kenneth W. Goslant, and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Ambulance Chief Lawton Rutter, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Chair Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Since there was no one present tonight from the Northfield Farmers Market, consideration of this matter will be postponed until the next meeting (04/14/15).
- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):** None.
- V. **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT**

- a. **Ambulance Chief Lawton Rutter.** Chief Rutter had provided the Board members beforehand with a written report and he now summarized its highpoints, particularly the dramatic increase in non-emergency transfers over the past year. During the entire 2013/2014 fiscal year, there had been twenty-nine (29) non-emergency transfers. For the first eight and one-half (8½) months of the current fiscal year, that number has increased to eighty-eight (88). The main reason is that local hospitals have relied more on Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) as other local ambulance departments are unwilling or unable to comply with their transfer requests.

Chief Rutter added that NAS staffing levels are decent at this time as there are several Norwich University (NU) students serving as volunteers. However, there is a need to reach out to the wider community since the end of the NU school year is approaching and some students will be going elsewhere. He then discussed the high level of training that NAS volunteers undergo. Chief Rutter added that the many hours of required training and the irregular callout hours make it difficult for many people to commit to be a NAS volunteer.

Chief Rutter then noted that NAS recently received a \$21,000 Homeland Security grant that will be used to purchase new communications equipment, i.e., portable radios, repeaters, etc. He also submitted a \$5000 grant application to VLCT PACIF which, if successful, would be used to purchase a "powered stretcher." As Northfield's E-911 Coordinator, Chief Rutter is using GIS to fix errors in the E-911 address numbering system.

Selectman Maxwell asked if NAS revenues now are exceeding expenditures. Chief Rutter confirmed that this was the case. There is a sixteen percent (16%) increase in revenue this fiscal year that is largely due to more calls for service in recent months. There are safeguards in the current budget in case this does not continue. Manager Schulz added that although some line items may become maxed out by the end of the fiscal year, there is every expectation that NAS will stay within its overall budget.

Selectman Gadbois asked if standby coverage was limited to athletic events. Chief Rutter said that sporting events were a large part of it but there also were several graduation (and other) ceremonies held on the NU campus (i.e., for Norwich University, Vermont Technical College, Northfield High School, etc.). There also was a well-attended concert held on campus last year that had to be covered.

Selectman Gadbois asked if the rates that NAS charges for transport, etc. are sufficient. Chief Rutter said that although they are somewhat comparable to those charged by other regional departments, they probably are due for review and perhaps slight adjustment. Selectman Gadbois asked if there are any other possible grant funds on the horizon. Chief Rutter stated that although some grant applications can be anticipated, others just appear out of nowhere. Also, some grants that seemed attractive in the beginning will turn out to have so many unreasonable stipulations (such as specific equipment purchase requirements) that in the end there is no reason to apply.

Selectman Maxwell asked if NAS faced any major challenges at this time. Chief Rutter said that maintaining proper staffing levels was a constant concern. There needs to be a proper balance between NAS volunteers who are NU students and those who are not. The students leave Northfield when school is not in session (or permanently when they graduate). This is why NAS will be holding a recruiting drive over the next couple of months. There also may be a need to review increasing pay levels and stipends.

Selectman Goslant asked if emergency calls to NU campus constituted a significant part of the NAS workload. Chief Rutter stated that traditionally responses to NU campus were about one-third (1/3) of NU's emergency callouts. The local nursing homes were responsible for another third (1/3) with the rest involving the general community. In recent years, NU's share has decreased slightly as NAS has increased its share of callouts to neighboring towns, i.e., West Berlin, Roxbury, etc.

Chief Rutter then asked the Board members if there had been any recent progress in the planning phases for a proposed combined EMS facility (Fire and Ambulance) on Wall Street. Manager Schulz stated that the Town had received grant money to hire an architect to provide various design concepts with cost estimates. The initial cost estimates had been very high so there was a Board consensus that there was a need to rethink the whole process. Chief Rutter noted that the current NAS facility on Dog River Drive is located in a flood zone and had suffered significant damage due to Tropical Storm Irene. He would like to see some progress in this matter to ensure that the facility design grant does not "time out" before any action can be taken. Chair Quinn still favors the concept of a combined EMS facility provided that it can be economically feasible. The relevant Select Board committees should be meeting soon to discuss the next steps.

Chair Quinn then thanked Chief Rutter for his presentation tonight and for the exceptionally fine work he has done as NAS Chief since assuming the position less than a year ago. The other Board members echoed this sentiment.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **March 10, 2015 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #19-15.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #19-15 in the amount of \$116,784.60. Selectman Gadbois saw new legal expenses for an old matter; when will this end? Manager Schulz was unsure but noted that the bill amounts have gone down. The Town's attorney is aware of the Board's frustration and is making every effort to wind up this matter as soon as possible. Selectman Gadbois then noted a FEMA buyout expense. Manager Schulz stated that this is for the buyout property located at 449 Water Street now that the owner has decided to participate in the program. FEMA will reimburse most of the expenses incurred. Selectman Goslant saw more uniform expenses for the Northfield Police Department. He has asked in the past why new part-time officers cannot make use of used equipment already on hand. Manager Schulz will discuss this again with Police Chief James Dziobek. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Warrant #19-15A.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve warrant #19-15A in the amount of \$51,154.22. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Warrant #19-15B.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve warrant #19-15B in the amount of \$20,079.24. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through March 15, 2015.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$84,480.23. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Bond Anticipation Note (RSMS Program).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$45,355 at 1.20% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the Tax Certificate. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of BusinessCard Agreement Resolution.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the resolution. Manager Schulz stated that this credit card will replace the current one for the "Village of Northfield" that will expire at the end of April 2015. The credit card will have a \$3000 limit and is used for purchases that require a credit card. Selectman Maxwell asked if this is the municipality's only credit card. Manager Schulz will check on this. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Select Board Committee Assignments.** Chair Quinn sent an email to the Board members in which he suggested how the various Board committee assignments should be filled. The full list is as follows: **Budget and Financial Review** (Selectmen Maxwell and Quinn); **Town Buildings & Energy** (Selectmen Doney and Gadbois); **Economic Development** (Selectmen Maxwell and Quinn); **Norwich University** (Selectman Quinn); **Highway Planning & Project Oversight** (Selectmen Goslant and Quinn); **Public Safety Oversight & Planning** (Selectmen Doney and Gadbois); and **Labor Agreement & Bargaining** (Selectman Goslant).

In addition, Selectman Maxwell will serve as the Select Board's representative on the Water/Wastewater Utility Commission and Selectman Goslant on the Electric Utility Commission. Chair Quinn and Manager Schulz will represent Northfield on solid waste management issues as the Town transitions from its current membership in the Mad River Resource Management Alliance (MRRMA) to possible membership in the Tri-Town Alliance. Selectman Goslant will continue to attend meetings of the Recreation Committee on the Select Board's behalf. Stephen Fitzhugh will continue to serve as Northfield's representative to Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA) and Manager Schulz will remain the VPPSA alternate representative. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve the appointments listed above. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- d. **Appointment of Various Town Officials.** The terms of several Select Board-appointed Town positions will expire at the end of this month. The vacancies were advertised to the general public and the current office holders were asked if they would like to be reappointed. (Letters of interest had been received for some but not all of the positions listed below.)
 1. **Conservation Commission.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to reappoint Christine Barnes and Leslie Matthews to new four (4) year terms. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** The two (2) remaining vacant positions will be re-advertised.
 2. **Recreation Committee.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to reappoint Michele Langley and Heidi Passalacqua to new three (3) year terms. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** The two (2) remaining vacant positions will be re-advertised.
 3. **Planning Commission.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to reappoint Katherine Beal and Mary Dollenmaier to new three (3) year terms. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
 4. **Zoning Board of Adjustment.** No one expressed interest in the vacancy so it will be re-advertised.
 5. **Town Service Officer.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to reappoint Mark Podgwaite. This is an annual appointment. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

6. **Tree Warden.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to reappoint Russ Barrett. This is an annual appointment. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
7. **Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) Representative.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to reappoint Laura Hill-Eubanks. This is an annual appointment. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- e. **Appointment of Brown Public Library Trustee.** There now are two (2) vacant positions on the Brown Public Library (BPL) Board of Trustees. Maryann McGinnis has submitted a letter of interest for one of the positions and the BPL Trustees have recommended her appointment. This would be an interim appointment until next year's Town Meeting (03/01/16). Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to appoint Maryann McGinnis to the BPL Board of Trustees. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **FEMA Buyout Process.** As indicated earlier, the fourteenth (14th) flood-damaged property (449 Water Street) now is a part of the buyout process. Selectman Maxwell asked if there had been any problems completing the paperwork for this property. Manager Schulz stated that there still are tenants in the building but they are supposed to be gone by this coming weekend. He will not sign anything until the structure is vacated.
- b. **Municipal Facilities Master Plan.** Selectman Maxwell would like a long-term master plan developed for all municipal facilities so that the Select Board can plan in advance which facilities need to be renovated or replaced. Chair Quinn agreed that this would be a good task for the Town Buildings & Energy Committee. He added that the poor condition of the Municipal Building has been a concern for some time. Although needed building renovations have been flagged in the past, few have been done since there always had been the alternate possibility of building a new structure elsewhere.
- c. **Tri-Town Alliance.** Selectman Gadbois asked when the Alliance would hold its next meeting. Chair Quinn stated that their next meeting is this coming Thursday (03/26/15). It is hoped that the current members (Braintree, Brookfield, and Randolph) will accept Northfield as a possible new member at that time. Manager Schulz said that should this occur he will start work on the needed documents, i.e. working agreement, etc.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT. Manager Schulz had nothing to add to his emailed report.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED). There was none.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF NEEDED). Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a legal matter and contract with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:13 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 9:15 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Doney, to authorize Manager Schulz to purchase the Donahue property located at 1 Central Street for the purpose of stormwater improvements as part of a Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) Ecosystem Restoration Grant. The purchase price is \$3,500 and grant funds will be used. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

XIII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of April 14, 2015.